AMNESTY, THE NOBEL PEACE PRIZE-WINNING RIGHTS ORGANIZATION, SAID ON MONDAY THAT 50 TO 100 CHILDREN PROTESTING COMPULSORY SCHOOL UNIFORMS HAD DIED IN A BANGUI PRISON ON APRIL 18.

IT SAID MORE THAN 100 CHILDREN HAD BEEN HELD IN A CROWDED JAIL AND THAT BETWEEN 12 AND 28 HAD SUFFOCATED, WHILE OTHERS WERE BAYONETTED OR BEATEN TO DEATH WITH STICKS AND WHIPS.

"AS WE MEET IN THIS CONFERENCE ROOM, A HUGE CROWD OF PARENTS IS GATHERED OUTSIDE WHO HAVE COME COME SPONTANEOUSLY TO CHEER ME," THE RULER TOLD THE DIPLOMATS YESTERDAY.

"IF IT IS TRUE THAT I HAVE HAD CHILDREN MASSACRED, DO YOU THINK THE POPULATION AFFECTED WOULD STILL BE SO ENTHUSIASTIC?" HE ASKED, ACCO JING TO ACAP.

THE CHILDREN ... RE SAID TO HAVE BEEN JAILED AS PUNISHMENT FOR THROWING STONES AT OFFICIAL CARS, INCLUDING THAT OF EMPEROR BOKASSA.

MORE 1230

bill report
— we wrote that GCAE says it wanted comment + it seems to us that a month that agency can could settle the question of fact one F for all.
— we will follow this quarter

DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDS/MR
REVIEWED BY RLC DATE 10/25/82
RDS ☐ or XDS ☐ EXT. DATE
TS AUTH. ON(S)
ENDORSE EXISTING MARKINGS ☐
DECLASSIFIED / EXCISABLE ☑
RELEASE DENIED ☐
PA or FOI EXEMPTIONS

A295

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AM-CHILDREN 2 BANGUI

ACAP SAID, "HIS MAJESTY BOKASSA THE FIRST, HEAD OF STATE, INSISTED ON CONFERRING PERSONALLY WITH THE REPRESENTATIVES OF INTERNATIONAL OPINION TO COMMUNICATE ... TANGIBLE PROOF AGAINST THE ALLEGATIONS OF THE ORGANIZATION AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL AND THE FOREIGN PRESS ABOUT AN ALLEGED MASSACRE OF YOUNG CENTRAFRICANS BY SOLDIERS OF THE IMPERIAL GUARD."

THE AGENCY SAID THE EMPEROR PRODUCED DOCUMENTS TO DISPROVE THE CHARGES, INCLUDING A STATEMENT BY THE GOVERNMENT OF ZAIRE CONFIRMING THAT ABOUT 140 SCHOOLCHILDREN, WHOSE TEMPORARY ABSENCE COULD HAVE CAUSED CONCERN, WERE IN ZAIRE.

THE DIPLOMATS WERE ALSO GIVEN COPIES OF LEAFLETS DISTRIBUTED BY THE ASSOCIATION OF CENTRAFRICAN STUDENTS IN PARIS, WHICH ACAP SAID WERE THE BASIS OF THE LONDON-BASED AMNESTY'S CHARGES. "THIS GROUP, BECAUSE OF ITS LOCATION, CANNOT POSSIBLY KNOW THE TRUTH," THE AGENCY SAID.

EMPEROR BOKASSA SAID HE WAS DEDICATED TO THE PRINCIPLES OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND INVITED HUMANITARIAN ORGANIZATIONS TO SEND INVESTIGATIVE MISSIONS TO BANGUI, ACCORDING TO ACAP.

THE FORMER PRESIDENT BOKASSA CHANGED HIS COUNTRY FROM A REPUBLIC TO AN EMPIRE WHEN HE CROWNED HIMSELF IN DECEMBER 1977 IN AN ELABORATE CEREMONY MODELED BY THE CORONATION OF NAPOLEON BONAPARTE IN PARIS IN 1804.

REUTER 1233